1: Letter L-3 (1866-93) 1893? AV3 Dard AV3

brother asks her if she consents to the marriage. In receiving, or imagining, an affirmative, he turns round to the Mulla, who after asking three times whether he, she and the bridegroom as well as all present are satisfied, reads the prayers and completes the ceremonial. Then some rice, boiled in milk, is brought in, of which the boy and the girl take a spoonful. They do not retire the first night, but grace the company with their presence. The people assembled then amuse themselves by hearing the musicians, eating, &c.

It appears to be the custom that a person leaves an entertainment whenever he likes, which is generally the case after he has eaten enough.

It must, however, not be imagined that the sexes are secluded from each other in Dardistan. Young people have continual opportunities of meeting each other in the fields at their work or at festive gatherings. Love declarations often take place on these occasions, but if any evil intention is perceived the seducer of a girl is punished by this savage, but virtuous, race with death. The Dards know and speak of the existence of "pure love," "pâk ishiqi." Their love songs show sufficiently that they are capable of a deeper, than mere sexual, feeling. No objection to lawful love terminating in matrimony is ever made unless the girl or the boy is of a lower caste. In Gilgit, however, the girl may be of a lower caste than the bridegroom. In Astôr it appears that a young man, whose parents—to whom he must mention his desire for marrying any particular person—refuse to intercede, often attains his point by threatening to live in the family of the bride and become an adopted son. A "Shin" of true race at Astor may live in concubinage with a girl of lower caste, but the

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(the grain, ghee and sheep that may accompany the betrothal-present is called by the Astoris "sukkra.")

Husband,	= bonio,	Gil.	bardyo,	Astôr.
Wife,	= Gruyo,	Gil.	gréyo,	Astôr.

Wedding dinner "gwiy tiki" in Gilgit. "Kojjigar bai kyas," in Astori (?) ["tiki" is bread, "bai" is a chuppati, kyas = bone].

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Translation :—

(i) Do not weep, O flower-like girl, thy complexion will turn pale!
(i) Thou wilt go on a lofty hill, O girl, thy complexion will turn pale.
(i) Thou wilt (by weeping) burn your heart, thy complexion will turn pale.

In Shinaki there is a custom called "Kao." If a young man has determined to marry a certain girl but her parents are not willing to give her to him, the young man either calls out in an assembly of the village headmen :—" The girl is mine, and I will perform 'Gao' if she is not given to me." Sometimes in order to assemble the people he fires a gun outside the village and utters the same words in the presence of those who collect ; or if he gets an opportunity he tears the girl's shirt slightly in the presence of some other men and says to her :—" You are mine." When this has been done, the parents are obliged to marry the girl to him, but they can demand from him whatever they like up to the limit of his means. If they marry the girl to anyone else, the young man will murder the girl as well as her husband as soon as he gets an opportunity.

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IV.

The Ceremony of "Seeto-ai-Thaki" (Seat of Chastity).

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This ceremony was performed for old women, who have been virtuous and chaste throughout their lives. These women were called "Seeto," and their descendants were very proud of them, so that on the occasion of family quarrels they used to say to the opposite party, "What have you to say to us? Our mother is "Seeto," while yours is not." To accomplish this rite, an elevated stone platform, about five yards each in length and breadth and a yard in height, was erected by the woman's nearest relatives. On the day appointed all her kinsmen came to the place, with a white she-goat as a sacred judge, to decide the fate of the old woman. The latter was clad in silk and placed on a bench. The eldest of the family bound a silk turban on his head, as well as on that of the goat, and, placing the goat before the bench with its face outward, addressed it in the following manner :—

"O thou white goat, if my daughter" (or whatever relative the woman was to the speaker) "has throughout her life lived an honest, virtuous and pious life and has remained clear of the sins and crimes of falsehood, theft, debauchery and treachery, be pleased to salute this bench for the sake of such a righteous and godly woman." In the case of a woman having led a blameless life, the goat by touching the bench approved her virtue. The assembled crowd then broke forth in cheers, and as an expression of their joy the relatives killed several goats and fed the people present. But if it happened otherwise, and the goat instead of performing what was considered an obeisance to the bench, ran round it bleating, then a great shame took hold of all the woman's kinsmen, and they ran away to their homes, never to speak to her again during the remainder of her life.